

What is claimed is:

1. A method of finding the position of an object in a space, the method comprising:

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identifying the positions of pixels in an image of the space, which satisfy a condition relating to a pixel property associated with the object;

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classifying said positions into a group according to classification criteria; and

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producing a group position representation for said group, from positions classified in said group, said group position representation representing the position of the object in the space.

2. The method of claim 1 further comprising producing said image.

3. The method of claim 2 further comprising dividing said image into zones.

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4. The method of claim 3 wherein identifying comprises identifying said positions of pixels in a zone of said image, which satisfy said condition.

5. The method of claim 3 further comprising dividing said image into adjacent zones.

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6. The method of claim 5 wherein classifying comprises associating said pixel positions satisfying said condition and in a zone, with the same group as pixel positions satisfying said condition and in an adjacent zone and within a threshold distance of each other.

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7. The method of claim 1 wherein identifying comprises identifying the position of an up-edge pixel having a difference in intensity relative to an intensity of a nearby pixel, where said difference in intensity is greater than a threshold value.

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8. The method of claim 7 wherein identifying comprises identifying the position of a down-edge pixel having a difference in intensity relative to an intensity of a nearby pixel, where said difference in intensity is less than a threshold value.

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9. The method of claim 8 wherein identifying comprises identifying the positions of pixels between said up-edge and said down-edge pixels.

10. The method of claim 1 wherein identifying comprises identifying the positions of pixels having an intensity greater than a threshold value.

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11. The method of claim 1 wherein classifying comprises associating said pixel positions satisfying said condition and within a threshold distance of each other with the same group.

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12. The method of claim 1 wherein classifying comprises classifying said positions into a plurality of groups and combining group position representations of said plurality of groups into a single group position representation.

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13. The method of claim 12 wherein classifying comprises associating said pixel positions in the same zone satisfying said condition and within a threshold distance of each other with the same group.

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14. The method of claim 13 wherein classifying comprises associating said pixel positions in adjacent zones satisfying said condition and within a threshold distance of each other with the same group.

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15. The method of claim **14** wherein classifying comprises associating said pixel positions satisfying said condition and within a threshold distance of each other with the same group.
16. The method of claim **12** further comprising correlating successive group position representations representing positions within a distance of each other.
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17. The method of claim **16** further comprising determining whether said successive group position representations are within a target area.
18. The method of claim **17** further comprising redefining said target area to compensate for movement of the object in the space.
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19. The method of claim **18** further comprising identifying a pattern in said group position representation.
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20. The method of claim **19** further comprising identifying a spatial pattern in a set of group position representations.
21. The method of claim **19** further comprising identifying a time pattern in said group position representation.
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22. The method of claim **19** further comprising associating said group position representation with an object when said pattern matches a pattern associated with the object.
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23. The method of claim **22** further comprising deleting said target area when said pattern does not match a pattern associated with the object.

24. The method of claim **12** further comprising transforming said group position representation into a space position representation, wherein said space position representation represents position coordinates of the object in the space.

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25. The method of claim **1** further comprising executing the steps of claim **1** for each of at least one different image of the space to produce group position representations for each group in each image.

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26. The method of claim **25** further comprising transforming said group position representations into a space position representation, wherein said space position representation represents position coordinates of the object in the space.

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27. The method of claim **26** further comprising producing a representation of orientation from a plurality of space position representations.

28. An apparatus for finding the position of an object in a space, the apparatus comprising:

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means for identifying the positions of pixels in an image of the space, which satisfy a condition relating to a pixel property associated with the object;

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means for classifying said positions into a group according to classification criteria; and

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means for producing a group position representation for said group, from positions classified in said group, said group position representation representing the position of the object in the space.

- 29.** A computer readable medium for providing instructions for directing a processor circuit to:

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identify the positions of pixels in an image of the space, which satisfy a condition relating to a pixel property associated with the object;

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classify said positions into a group according to classification criteria; and

produce a group position representation for said group, from positions classified in said group, said group position representation representing the position of the object in the space.

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- 30.** An apparatus for finding the position of an object in a space, the apparatus comprising:

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a circuit operable to identify the positions of pixels in an image of the space, which satisfy a condition relating to a pixel property associated with the object;

a circuit operable to classify said positions into a group according to classification criteria; and

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a circuit operable to produce a group position representation for said group, from positions classified in said group, said group position representation representing the position of the object in the space.

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- 31.** The apparatus of claim **30** further comprising an image-producing apparatus operable to produce said image.

32. The apparatus of claim **31** wherein said image-producing apparatus comprises a charge coupled device.
- 5 33. The apparatus of claim **31** wherein said image-producing apparatus comprises a complementary metal-oxide semiconductor device having an analog-to-digital converter.
- 10 34. The apparatus of claim **30** further comprising a plurality of image-producing apparatus.
35. The apparatus of claim **31** wherein said image-producing apparatus further comprises a filter.
- 15 36. The apparatus of claim **30** wherein said circuit operable to identify and said circuit operable to classify comprise a common application specific integrated circuit.
- 20 37. The apparatus of claim **30** wherein said circuit operable to identify and said circuit operable to produce comprise a common digital signal processor.
- 25 38. The apparatus of claim **37** wherein said digital signal processor comprises an operating buffer and a receive buffer, the receive buffer facilitating receipt of data to be processed while the data in the operating buffer is being processed.
39. The apparatus of claim **38** wherein said circuit operable to produce further comprises a computer.
- 30 40. The apparatus of claim **30** wherein said circuit operable to identify is operable to identify positions of pixels in a zone of said image, which satisfy said condition.

- 5 **41.** The apparatus of claim **40** wherein said circuit operable to identify is operable to associate said pixel positions satisfying said condition and in a zone, with the same group as pixel positions satisfying said condition and in an adjacent zone and within a threshold distance of each other.
- 10 **42.** The apparatus of claim **30** wherein said circuit operable to identify is operable to identify the position of an up-edge pixel having a difference in intensity relative to an intensity of a nearby pixel, where said difference in intensity is greater than a threshold value.
- 15 **43.** The apparatus of claim **42** wherein said circuit operable to identify is operable to identify the position of a down-edge pixel having a difference in intensity relative to an intensity of a nearby pixel, where said difference in intensity is less than a threshold value.
- 20 **44.** The apparatus of claim **43** wherein said circuit operable to identify is operable to identify the positions of pixels between said up-edge and said down-edge pixels.
- 25 **45.** The apparatus of claim **30** wherein said circuit operable to identify is operable to identify the positions of pixels having an intensity greater than a threshold value.
- 30 **46.** The apparatus of claim **30** wherein said circuit operable to classify is operable to associate said pixel positions satisfying said condition and within a threshold distance of each other with the same group.
- 47.** The apparatus of claim **30** wherein said circuit operable to classify is operable to classify said positions into a plurality of groups and to combine group position representations of said plurality of groups into a single group position representation.

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48. The apparatus of claim **30** wherein said circuit operable to produce is operable to correlate successive group position representations representing positions within a distance of each other.
49. The apparatus of claim **48** wherein said circuit operable to produce is operable to determine whether said successive group position representations are within a target area.
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50. The apparatus of claim **49** wherein said circuit operable to produce is operable to redefine said target area to compensate for movement of the object in the space.
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51. The apparatus of claim **50** wherein said circuit operable to produce is operable to identify a pattern in said group position representation.
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52. The apparatus of claim **51** wherein said circuit operable to produce is operable to identify a spatial pattern in a set of group position representations.
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53. The apparatus of claim **51** wherein said circuit operable to produce is operable to identify a time pattern in said group position representation.
54. The apparatus of claim **51** wherein said circuit operable to produce is operable to associate said group position representation with an object when said pattern matches a pattern associated with the object.
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55. The apparatus of claim **54** wherein said circuit operable to produce is operable to delete said target area when said pattern does not match a pattern associated with the object.

56. The apparatus of claim 30 wherein said circuit operable to produce is operable to transform said group position representation into a space position representation, wherein said space position representation represents position coordinates of the object in the space.

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57. A system comprising the apparatus of claim 30 and further comprising:

a housing securable to a movable object movable within a space;

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an energy radiator on said housing operable to continuously radiate energy; and

a circuit operable to cause said energy radiator to continuously radiate energy in an encoded radiation pattern; and

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an image-producing device operable to produce an image representing at least a portion of the object, said image being represented by a plurality of pixels.

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58. A system for finding the position of an object in a space, the system comprising a plurality of apparatuses as claimed in claim 30 and further comprising:

a plurality of image producing apparatus operable to produce respective images of the object in the space; and

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a processor circuit operable to produce a space position representation for the object in the space from group position representations produced by respective apparatuses as claimed in claim 30.

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- 59.** The system of claim **58** wherein said processor circuit is operable to produce a representation of orientation from a plurality of space position representations.